

All Fishing Vessels Engaged in Oil Cleanup in Breton Sound Called Back
May 27, 2010

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) again called on the federal government to deploy temporary health care clinics to south Louisiana to treat and screen workers and residents affected by the oil leak in the Gulf. Yesterday, several crewmembers of three vessels involved in oil recovery work reported experiencing nausea, dizziness, headaches and chest pains and were transported to West Jefferson Hospital in Marrero, La. From Breton Sound Marina, where the workers were operating out of, to West Jefferson Hospital is an hour drive or more ([see map](#)), depending on traffic conditions. One of the workers had to be MEDEVACed by air to the hospital.

“As I first alerted the federal government over a week ago, our workers and residents in the oil-affected areas of south Louisiana are facing a looming health crisis,” said Rep. Melancon. “People are being exposed to hazardous oil fumes and potentially dangerous dispersants every day, and there is no health care infrastructure in place to treat them and monitor the situation. We must not wait any longer to set up temporary clinics at the marinas and fishing communities where these workers are stationed.”

“Tomorrow when the President visits south Louisiana, I will personally ask him to take action on getting temporary clinics and health care workers in place.”

Last week, Congressman Melancon [requested the Administration](#) send temporary clinics to the more rural coastal areas to treat the people being exposed to hazardous materials. The clinics would provide medical checkups to people who have come in contact with the oil and also assist in monitoring the health effects of the oil leak on south Louisianians.

After the four workers reported health problems yesterday, the Unified Command directed all 125 of the commercial vessels engaged in oil recovery operations in the Breton Sound area to report back to their temporary accommodations in Breton Sound as a precautionary measure.

In his letter last week to the Administration requesting temporary clinics, Congressman Melancon reiterated that BP should be held responsible for all costs for the recovery, including the additional health care services for south Louisiana.

[Click here](#) to read Congressman Melancon’s letter.

Congressman Melancon has worked to bring federal attention to the health needs of Louisianians impacted by the oil leak in the Gulf. Last Friday, Congressman Melancon [sent a letter](#) to the Administration requesting assistance in establishing temporary mental health services to help residents cope with the BP oil disaster in the Gulf. Congressman Melancon has hosted two recent town hall meetings in south Louisiana where he has heard from residents about the need for more mental health services.

Congressman Melancon has been leading efforts in Louisiana to coordinate the private, federal,

state, and local response to the oil leak caused by the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil platform one month ago. He represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

Congressman Melancon held a [town hall in Houma](#) last weekend to listen to constituent concerns about the oil leak disaster in the Gulf of Mexico and provide information about the response efforts. Congressman Melancon invited representatives from the Coast Guard, BP, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Small Business Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and officials from Terrebonne, Lafourche and St. Mary Parishes to take part in the town hall to help answer questions and listen to concerns.

Earlier this month, Congressman Melancon organized a [town hall in Chalmette](#) to share information with constituents about the oil disaster response efforts. Representatives from the Coast Guard, BP, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Louisiana State University, Louisiana's seafood industry, and St. Bernard Parish officials answered questions and listened to concerns.

Congressman Melancon has been working closely with parish and federal officials to monitor response efforts and provide assistance where needed. Last weekend, he toured the coast along Terrebonne, Lafourche, Jefferson, and Plaquemines Parishes by helicopter with U.S. Coast Guard Captain Edwin Stanton, the Federal Coordinating Officer for the disaster, and a representative from BP. They surveyed the impact of the oil leak from the Deepwater Horizon disaster on the coastline west of the Mississippi River.

Congressman Melancon has also [toured by boat](#) the coastal marshes in St. Bernard Parish with parish officials and viewed the efforts of local fishermen to deploy boom. He has also met with Terrebonne and Lafourche Parish officials and been briefed on their plans for boom deployment and other protective measures to prevent the oil sheen from damaging their coastal marshes. Over one million feet of protective boom have been deployed to protect Louisiana's fragile coastal marshes from the oil slick.

In his conversations with local fishermen and parish officials involved in laying the boom, Congressman Melancon learned they face a severe shortage in boom material, hindering their ability to protect the coast. In response, Congressman Melancon [sent a letter to President Barack Obama](#) requesting military aircraft be used to help bring protective boom to the Gulf Coast more quickly. The President granted his request and within a few days of receiving Congressman Melancon's letter, the first Air Force aircraft arrived in Belle Chasse with additional boom.

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